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FOREIGN NEWS ON APPLES

THE CUBAN APPLE MARKET

Sales of American apples in Cuba during 1925 amounted to 63,900 boxes and 17,106 barrels as compared with 75,727 boxes and 15,773 barrels during 1924. Reduced to a boxed basis this represents a total of 120,350 boxes for 1925 as against 127,780 boxes for 1924. Havana is the central point for the Cuban supply of apples as well as other fresh fruits, says Mr. R. M. Connell, the American Trade Commissioner at that port, in a report received in the Department of Agriculture. Practically all of the apples consumed in Cuba are imported by Havana distributors. Imports by freight steamer are insignificant, most of the fruit coming in by the freight ferry which operates between Key West and Havana. The Key West Ferry is preferred because refrigerator cars can be brought direct to Havana where adequate cold storage facilities are available, thus reducing to a minimum the possibility of deterioration from frequent handling and exposure to the tropical climate.

In Cuba as in other Latin American countries, there is little variety in the manner of eating apples. Pies and sauces have never been fancied by the Cuban. Apples are usually eaten as a fresh table fruit, with salads, or less frequently, baked. A former United States Department of Agriculture official now engaged in commercial experiment work in Cuba states that the taste of the Cuban people is not in favor of the tart fruits of northern countries. They prefer the sweet fruits of tropical countries or highly sweetened fruit products imported from countries of the temperate zones. The introduction of fresh fruit from the United States, he says, is of comparatively recent date.

The market preference is for the choicest kind of eating apples, Delicious, Rome Beauty and Winter Banana being the most popular varieties. Among the other boxed varieties regularly seen on the market, but in small quantities, are Winesaps and Yellow Newtowns. The demand runs principally toward Extra Fancy and Fancy grades. Boxed apples are imported mainly from August to January though cold storage stocks are brought in all the year round. The barreled varieties in most demand are York Imperial and Ben Davis, the preference being almost entirely for grade A 2½ inch sizes. No barreled apples are imported after January. In general it can be stated that apples from the Pacific Northwest are preferred to barreled varieties. Small quantities of barreled apples are shipped by steamer to Havana but most of it comes in by ferry via Key West. Practically no apples are imported from countries other than the United States, although Chile has shipped small quantities to the

Havana market in the past. The customs duty on apples imported into Cuba, says the Trade Commissioner, is 78¢ per 100 kilos, (35¢ per 100 pounds) with a 20 per cent preferential in favor of apples from the United States. This makes the tariff on American apples about 23¢ per 100 pounds.

The importation and distribution of apples is largely in the hands of six concerns in Havana, who are, with one exception, principally engaged in the buying and selling of fruit. All of these houses buy singly or in combination in carload lots, for their own account. Cash terms are customary in the Havana market, says the Trade Commissioner, practically all shipments being paid for in advance.

One of the principal importing concerns is controlled by American capital and has an office in New York City through which all purchases of American apples are made. This firm imports about 40 cars of boxed and 30 cars of barreled apples annually. It has refrigerator capacity in Havana for 70 cars. This concern also purchases potatoes, onions and eggs. A second firm deals principally in potatoes, onions and eggs, but handles apples as a side line. This firm imports about 20 carloads of apples a year, principally barreled varieties from Pennsylvania where it has exclusive export arrangements. A third firm with headquarters in the Havana central market, imports on its own account about 45 carloads of apples annually. A fourth firm imports about 20 carloads annually. A fifth firm imports fresh fruits, potatoes and eggs and exports pineapples. This company purchases up to 15 cars of apples annually and frequently combines with another importer on carload purchases. This company also handles apples on consignment as well as on its own account. The sixth importing firm imports only small quantities of apples.

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